

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (canceled)

21. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow, said apparatus comprising:

an incoming feeder track, said incoming feeder track including a first transport device for controlling and feeding said units at a predetermined variable or constant speed;

an outgoing feeder track;

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track, said at least one shifting device being pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis and including a second transport device arranged for feeding and guiding said units towards said outgoing feeder track; and,

a control device capable of controlling speeds of each said unit and of determining ~~proper~~ shifting of said shifting device,

said control device being arranged for speed control of said shifting device so as to accelerate said units when said units enter the second transport device of said shifting device, thereby providing separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow while each unit is guided to a selected path of said outgoing feeder track, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow and for counting of said units passing through said shifting device.

22. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track, said shifting device and said outgoing feeder track.

23. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising means for pivoting said shifting device.

24. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said means for pivoting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

25. (currently amended) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the control device further comprises~~ing~~ means for varying~~controlling~~ the speeds of each said unit.

Claim 26 (canceled)

27. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein each said unit is accelerated when entering said shifting device to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

28. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

29. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

Claims 30 and 31 (canceled)

32. (original) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

33. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling units within a continuous flow, said apparatus comprising:

an incoming feeder track, said incoming feeder track including a first transport device for controlling and feeding said units at a predetermined variable or constant speed;

an outgoing feeder track;

at least one shifting device for controlled shifting of said flow from said incoming feeder track into a plurality of selectable paths of said outgoing feeder track said at least one shifting device being pivotally arranged about a pivoting axis and including a second transport device arranged for feeding and guiding said units towards said outgoing feeder track;

means for pivoting said shifting device;

means for controlling speeds of each said unit in said shifting device; and,

a control device capable of controlling said means for pivoting said shifting device, and said means for controlling the speeds of each said unit, wherein said control device operates in dependence of the speed of each said unit from said incoming feeder track, said shifting device, and said outgoing feeder track,

said control device being arranged for speed control of said means for controlling speeds of each said unit so as to accelerate said units when said units enter the second transport device of said shifting device in order to allow for separation of said units with respect to one another in a longitudinal direction of flow while each unit is guided to a selected path of said outgoing feeder track, said separation allowing for said controlled shifting without arresting said continuous flow and for counting of said units passing through said shifting device.

34. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said means for pivoting said shifting device is a motor controlled by commands from said control device.

35. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein each said unit is accelerated when entering said shifting device to a speed exceeding the speed of said flow from said incoming feeder track.

36. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said incoming feeder track is arranged for feeding units at a variable speed, while said shifting device is arranged for a constant speed.

37. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said plurality of selectable paths are horizontally spaced.

Claim 38-39 (canceled)

40. (original) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said selectable paths are substantially parallel to one another.

41. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said speed control is arranged to accelerate said units so as to provide a separation of at least a minimum distance between two consecutive units which allows said controlled shifting into said selectable paths.

42. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the shifting unit is arranged so that said minimum distance between two consecutive units is maintained at a position where said units leave said shifting unit and enter said outgoing feeder track.

43. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the second transport device acts transversally or vertically upon said units while feeding and guiding said units.

44. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the shifting unit is pivotally arranged about an imaginary axis extending generally in the vertical direction.

Claim 45 (canceled)

46. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said shifting unit is arranged for guiding at least two units simultaneously.

47. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said speed control is arranged to accelerate said units so as to provide a separation of at least a minimum distance between two consecutive units which allows said controlled shifting into said selectable paths.

48. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 47 wherein the shifting unit is arranged so that said minimum distance between two consecutive units is maintained at a position where said units leave said shifting unit and enter said outgoing feeder track.

49. (previously present) The apparatus according to claim 33 wherein the second transport device acts transversally or vertically upon said units while feeding and guiding said units.

50. (previously present) The apparatus according to claim 33 wherein the shifting unit is pivotally arranged about an imaginary axis extending generally in the vertical direction.

Claim 51 (canceled)

52. (previously presented) The apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said shifting unit is arranged for guiding at least two units simultaneously.